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# CROOK COUNTY FARM SERVICE AGENCY NEWS

NOVEMBER 2008

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## ***NON-INSURED ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)***

**December 1, 2008** is the application deadline for the Non-Insurable Assistance Program for forage (hay) crops, fall seeded grain crops that are intended to be harvested for hay, and grazing land. This deadline also includes Spring Wheat since Wheat is considered one crop (winter and spring) the earliest application deadline (December 1st) thus applies. The application service fee for NAP is \$250.00 per crop per county, with a county maximum of \$750.00. The fee cannot exceed a total of \$1,875.00 per producer with farming interests in multiple counties. NOTE: Producers must cover all crops in all counties where they have an interest to qualify for the new crop disaster program as outlined below.

## ***2008 FARM BILL DISASTER PROGRAMS***

The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Act), Pub. L. 110-246, was enacted June 18, 2008. The 2008 Act created several new disaster programs under the title, "Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance".

To be eligible for the SURE crop disaster program, producers **must** purchase at least CAT level of crop insurance for **all** insurable crops and NAP coverage for **all** non-insurable crops. \*Change from previous newsletter information: Crops (including pasture grass) intended to be grazed are not required to be covered by crop insurance or NAP in order for regular crops harvested for grain or hay to be eligible for the SURE crop disaster program.\* Only those crops intended to be harvested as grain or hay must be covered by crop insurance or NAP – this includes all interest in crops in all counties nationwide. \* Another change announced is a crop, determined and certified by the applicant in writing; to not be of "economic significance" (which means the crop does not contribute at least 10 percent to the total farm revenue) is exempted from the crop insurance or NAP purchase requirements. \*

LFP livestock forage program: eligible acres of crops intended for grazing, i.e. pasture grass, are those covered by either: 1/ Crop insurance under the PRF-VI policy – which coverage is obtained by the "grid" method, or 2/ By purchasing a NAP policy with FSA which covers all of the acreage for the crop in the applicants "unit" – which is basically all of the acres of the crop in the county for all farms.

\*Change in policy - If a producer's pasture grass is located in three crop insurance "grids" and they purchase a PRF policy on one grid only, they cannot obtain a NAP policy to cover the land in the other two grids. Thus, eligible acres for the LFP program will be the acres located in the PRF grid. Likewise, if they purchase NAP they cannot purchase crop insurance PRF. Thus, eligible acres for the LFP program will be all of the acres in the producers NAP unit. Bottom line – if a producer has a crop insurance grazing policy, regardless of number of acres insured they cannot purchase a NAP grazing crop policy and vice-versa.

The above changes for the SURE and LFP programs are important because of the confusion related to the crop insurance or NAP purchase requirements as originally announced by FSA and by crop insurance agents. With the fast approaching crop insurance and NAP policy purchase deadlines

producers should keep the above changes in mind when buying a policy. Remember – crop insurance and NAP, for all grain and all forage (hay) crops, are only required if a producer wants to be eligible to participate in the SURE crop disaster program. Keep in mind that if the “eligibility to participate” clause is met it does not guarantee a crop loss payment. There are additional loss requirements that must be met before a payment is triggered. Also, if a producer wants to be eligible to participate in the LFP program they must purchase either crop insurance – by grids, or purchase NAP. Eligible LFP acres with crop insurance are those “grid” acres. Eligible LFP acres with a NAP policy are those included in the NAP unit. Again, a payment is triggered when certain loss thresholds have been met.

Watch for more detailed information about these and other farm bill disaster programs in future newsletters.

***Important dates:***

November 30...Purchase Crop Insurance PRF-VI policy

December 1...NAP policy deadline (purchase) on:

All non-insurable perennial forage (grass hay and any Grass/Alfalfa (or other) that is not insurable for various reasons as certified by a crop insurance agent)

Pasture

Wheat intended for hay (forage) – includes winter wheat and spring wheat

Honey

December 1<sup>st</sup> is also the deadline for honey producers to report their hive numbers on form FSA-578 (crop report form) for the coming year. Filing of the report after this date will require a late-filed fee to be remitted.

### ***COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTIONS***

FSA's county committee system is very important to the administration of FSA programs to this country's farmers and ranchers. Ballots for the upcoming elections will be mailed in November. Please take the time to actively participate in the election process and return the ballots by December 1<sup>st</sup>. The election this year is for Local Administrative Area number 2 which is the middle third of the county (that area north of I-90 (from the South Dakota border) to Sundance, Highway 14, Cabin Creek road and Dead Man road to Campbell County line; and that area south of Highway 24 (from South Dakota border) to Hulett, New Haven road and Grazing Association road to the Campbell County line. If you live in this area and do not get a ballot by November 24<sup>th</sup> and would like to vote please let our office know.

### ***ACCURATE RECORDS***

We cannot stress enough how important it is for producers to ensure that our office has accurate records. This includes updated records on all of your farming interests (all grain, forage and grazing crops, and livestock interest for livestock disaster programs) in this county and all others – nationwide, as well as deeded, share rent, cash lease and AUM grazing on all leases and agreements.

Additionally, when completing paperwork in our office you should ensure that your name, (either as an individual or as an entity - such as a trust), your id numbers (including social security and entity id numbers), and address are correct. Incorrect information can delay benefits to you. Each time you file an application or contract please ensure all information is correct.

### ***COMMUNITY COLLABORATIVE RAIN AND HAIL SURVEY - CoCoRaHS***

CoCoRaHS collects weather data from volunteers in a county to track weather patterns and effects. Data is collected on rainfall, snow, temperature and severe storm conditions and damages. Wyoming FSA has been participating in this program for several years now and through this volunteer effort we are able to see on a more detailed level the weather patterns of Crook County. Before CoCoRaHS implementation Crook County had only 5 National Weather Service (NOAA) reporting stations but now,

with CoCoRaHS volunteers, there are 20 weather reporting stations in the county! The benefits of having more reporting stations are obvious – we have a more detailed view of Crook County weather.

Recently, it was made known to this office that the “Drought Monitor” system is now also reviewing CoCoRaHS data in determining what classification of drought a county is experiencing. In the past the drought monitor has, for the most part, been fairly accurate. However, discrepancies were found in the data mostly because of the lack of data to substantiate a more detailed analysis of drought conditions. For example, past drought monitor designations could only include the 5 NOAA stations in the county and as a result, areas that we know suffered a more severe drought did not receive such designation due to the lack of data to document such claims.

To explain the Drought Monitor a little. In years past, before a disaster program could be implemented in Crook County certain data needed reviewed and specific severity of drought conditions had to be met before we were approved for a disaster program. One set of data that required review was the Drought Monitor. If certain levels of drought designations (such as a classification rating of a “D2”) were not met in the monitor rating than a county was not eligible for assistance – thus our producers were not eligible. The new livestock forage program in the 2008 farm bill requires such Drought Monitor triggers. If certain designations are not met than there is no program for disaster relief.

I stated that with the addition of the CoCoRaHS program there are now 20 weather reporting stations in the county. Unfortunately, of these 20 there are only 12 that are active in reporting data. The loss of data from the 8 non-active sites could be critical in future implementation of various disaster programs and in the least, provide inaccurate data for the area of the non-active station.

I encourage you, if you are a CoCoRaHS volunteer, to please report your weather data as you agreed to. Your data could make all the difference in disaster program eligibility for Crook County. If are recording weather data and it is a matter of loading that information into the CoCoRaHS website and you simply just don’t do it for whatever reason, send me your monthly weather totals, listed by day, and I will input it into the website system for you. If you would like to become a CoCoRaHS volunteer please contact me. I can possibly get you set up with some free equipment. Thank you - Mike

#### **SIGNATURE AUTHORITY**

Many of you conduct your farm operation as an entity such as a corporation, trust, LLC, LLP, etc... In order for you to conduct business with Farm Service Agency, we are required to have documentation from you that shows who has authority to sign on the entity’s behalf such as a Corporate Resolution, Power of Attorney, or other acceptable Delegation of Authority. This is a reminder for newly formed entities that we need a copy of the minutes of your annual meeting or other documentation that shows the selection of the officers or the positions of the members and who has authority to sign FSA program documents.

For signature authority for FSA and CCC programs, husbands and wives can sign documents on behalf of each other for programs in which either has an interest unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to this office. Spouses may not grant Power of Attorney for each other and may not sign claim settlements for each other.

And, producers and landlords who previously executed a FSA-211 Power of Attorney form authorizing an attorney-in-fact to act on their behalf for programs need to check with this office to be sure this form is still current with the new farm programs. If you have executed a FSA-211, please contact this office.

#### ***NASS CONDUCTING COUNTY CASH RENTS SURVEY***

The 2008 Farm bill requires the use of current cash rental rates for various programs. The National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will be conducting a survey this fall to gather current cash rent values. NASS will be contacting farmers and ranchers who rent agricultural land, to complete this survey of cash rental rates on agricultural land. Data will be collected over the next 3 months. Those surveyed will be asked to report their cash rent rates on dry land, irrigated and pasture land. Results of

the survey will be published next April and will provide cash rent values for all counties. Producer can ask to receive the results of this survey (when made public), at the time of their interview.

### **CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM**

Although the Secretary of Agricultural has determined there will not be a general CRP sign-up in the near future, the continuous CRP program is still an option. The Continuous CRP is designed for environmentally desirable land devoted to certain eligible practices. For additional information contact our office.

### **ADDITIONAL FARM BILL PROGRAMS**

A few more disaster programs are provided for in the 2008 farm bill. Direct / Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) will be back as well as a new crop base payment program called ACRE. DCP will be administered like it has been in the past and will have "direct" payments and "counter-cyclical (CC) payments when the market triggers are met. ACRE provides for direct payments like DCP but instead of CC payments a producer will receive a payment based on the number of acres planted of a contract crop. More detailed information will be coming out in the near future.

Other items of importance in the new farm bill are a restructuring of the Person and Payment Limitation program with a host of other eligibility and program items being redesigned – some with major changes.

We may hold town meetings to explain the new programs and provisions. Watch for further information in future newsletters.

### **IMPORTANT FARM SERVICE AGENCY DATES TO REMEMBER**

**IMMEDIATELY...Notify county office of direct deposit changes, farm record changes or management changes**

**November 30...Crop Insurance policy deadline**

**December 1...NAP deadline**

**December 1...Deadline for returning Election Ballots**

**December 8...Election Ballots to be Counted**

**Call FSA prior to breaking up sod (new land) and before planting a crop on sod**

**For more information on any Farm Service Agency program, visit or call our office, or visit the FSA Homepage at [www.fsa.usda.gov](http://www.fsa.usda.gov)** Have a Nice Day, /s/ Mike Idler, CED

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